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Humanized health care expressed desire of Hoosiers in survey

Physicians with a good bedside manner and the capacity to treat the person and not the condition led the health care wish list of Hoosiers participating in an Indiana public-opinion research project.

Focus groups and a telephone survey this summer produced the findings for Indiana's Eye on Patients study, commissioned by the Indiana State Medical Association, Indiana Hospital & Health Association and IUSM.

"This is the first step we've taken in a project that is designed, in part, to identify what health information consumers want, to improve their access to it, and to improve patient care through better communication," said Robert Holden, MD, dean of IUSM, who chairs the Indiana Eye on Patients steering committee.

Hoosiers said they wanted doctors with good interpersonal skills. Many of the respondents in the telephone surveys and focus groups volunteered that they have found, or would find, another doctor or alternative provider if their current physician didn't take time to listen or to communicate.

The respondents also defined hospital quality in terms related to caring, and they indicated that they see nurses as the primary agents of this care. They expressed concern about fewer nurses caring for more and sicker patients and pointed to increased duties and paper work as destroying the patient/nurse relationship.

Those involved in the surveys also indicated they have faith in the quality of health care available to them and their families; what they question is the health care system. Hoosiers said they are skeptical about the ease with which individuals can negotiate the health care system, referring to an increasing "hassle factor."

Those surveyed said they rely on print and electronic media and the recommendations of friends, family and neighbors for their health-care information.

"They told us that doctors and hospitals could help them -- if they took the time -- to filter good information from bad, to identify sources of credible medical and health information and to provide easy access through their offices, clinics, outreach and community programs," said B. Lee Zacharias, the project's chief researcher who designed the study.

"As they become more sophisticated health-care consumers, Hoosiers may begin to question assumptions that they have made about certain health care issues, such as quality," Zacharias said. "Providers should anticipate that consumers will aggressively seek more information in this area.

Another project is the Indiana Clinical Variations Advisory Committee, chaired by George Lukemeyer, MD. Under the direction of the committee, researchers at IUSM are studying selected clinical conditions which will show variations in treatment on a geographic or demographic basis. John Wennberg, MD, MPH, and director of the Center for the Clinical Sciences at Dartmouth Medical School, has pointed out surprising variations in the way Medicare patients with identical clinical conditions are treated in different parts of the country.

The Indiana researchers have selected two clinical conditions for analysis from among all age groups in Indiana. The initial clinical conditions to be studied are below the knee amputations in patients with diabetes mellitus and pregnancy with Cesarean section.

BRIEFS

Holden appointed

IUSM Dean Robert W. Holden, MD, is among a handful of experts who will map Indiana's path in science and technology in the next century. Gov. Frank O'Bannon recently appointed Dr. Holden as a member of the new board of directors of the Indiana 21st Century Research and Technology Fund.

Dr. Holden, who joins other directors representing the fields of technology, finance, government, academia and business, is a strong advocate of biomedical research. The panel's formation comes in the wake of the Indiana General Assembly's decision to spend \$50 million over the next two years in science and technology research.

To secure funding: Letters of intent seeking 21st Century Research and Technology Funds are due Sept. 23 and should be submitted through the Web site <http://www.21stcentruy-research.org/>.

JSB membership

It's time for membership renewals in The John Shaw Billings History of Medicine Society, Inc.

"Our annual dues (\$10) continue to be low, covering the cost our meetings," said secretary Nancy L. Eckerman, MLS. "More important than members' dues is their interest in the history of medicine and allied health sciences."

Meetings are on Mondays, beginning at 3:30 p.m. with refreshments, followed by lectures at 4 p.m. Members meet in the Ruth Lilly Medical Library, Room 301. Make your check payable to: The John Shaw Billings Society, Inc., c/o The Ruth Lilly Medical Library, 975 W. Walnut St., IB100, Indianapolis, IN 46202-5121. For more information, call 274-2076.

Membership forms can be downloaded at <http://www.medlib.iupui.edu/hom/jsbmem.html>

Students to make city rounds

IUSM medical students will join forces with the North Arlington Community Health Care Center and Westside Community Health Center for health fairs. Students will help IUSM faculty physicians provide free screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and colon cancer in adults. Children also can be tested for their vision and hearing. Also, free health and safety literature will be distributed.

The North Arlington event is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 25, at 2505 N. Arlington Ave. The Westside health fair is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 2, at 2732 W. Michigan St. Both fairs occur during National Primary Care Week.

About 60 first through fourth-year medical students will be joined by students from the IU School of Dentistry and the School of Allied Health Sciences. "It's fun and educational for the whole family, and the only cost is your time," says fourth-year student Blase Polite, who along with Benjamin Bauer is coordinating the university's student participation in the health fairs.

Combined Seminar Series for October announced

Speakers at the October Combined Seminar Series include:

Oct. 6 -- Dr. Guo-Hua Fong, associate professor, University of Western Ontario London, Canada, "Endothelial Differentiation and Vascular Pattern of Formation in Mouse Development."

Oct. 13 -- Tim O'Connor, PhD, Department of Biology, Beckman Research Institute, City of Hope National Medical Center, Duarte, Calif., "Repair of Alkylation Damage in Human Cells."

Oct. 20-- Dr. Ulla Knaus, assistant professor, Department of Immunology, Scripps Research Institute, "Cellular Function Regulated by Rac CTPases."

Oct. 27 -- R. Michael Blaese, MD, chief scientific officer, Kimergan Inc.; President, Kimeragen Molecular Pharmaceuticals, Newtown, Penn.; and adjunct investigator, Clinical Gene Therapy Branch, National Human Genome Research Institute National Institutes of Health, " Chimeric RNA-DNA Oligonucleotide-Mediated Gene Repair for Genetic Diseases."

Sessions are on Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the IU Cancer Research Institute, room 101.

Center on Aging offers pilot funds

The clock is ticking on the application process for securing pilot funds for new projects and the development of collaborative partnerships between the IU Center for Aging Research and other university aging-related projects.

Grants of up to \$10,000 for one year or \$25,000 for two years are available, and proposals will be accepted in three areas of aging research: basic science of aging, clinical and/or behavioral research in aging or age-related disease, and the social science of aging.

The number of projects funded depends on the quality and number of proposals, and the size of the requested budgets. Faculty interested in applying must submit a four-page letter of intent by Nov. 1. Announcement of the awards will be Dec. 15.

For additional information on the application process, see <http://www.iupui.edu/~iucar/pilot.html>.

Submissions to Scope

Scope wants your news items.

There are three easy ways to submit story ideas or information to SCOPE:

- -- fax the information to 278-3502;
- -- e-mail the information to mhardin@iupui.edu;
- -- or mail the information to Mary Hardin, LO 401, IUPUI.

The deadline for copy is 8:30 a.m. Mondays, the week prior to publication.

<http://www.medicine.indiana.edu>
